State Dept. Denies Role as Censor of U.S. Science Data

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The State Department denied yesterday that it was acting as a censor of United States scientific information.

Just two days earlier, it had banned three American papers from this week's 17th International Astronautics Congress in Madrid.

The Russians in retaliation, promptly canceled five papers, including one on photographic observations by Soviet cosmonauts that had been eagerly awaited by the 250 U.S. scientists attending the congress.

At the same time, the United States Air Force abruptly withdrew a paper on the Palomares nuclear bomb incident from one of its own meetings in Germany—its second such move in three days.

The State Department insisted it was not out to disrupt the free flow of scientific knowledge between the United States and other nations. The Department said it banned the three papers for reasons of "foreign policy and national security."

Such disapprovals of scientific papers are rare, a State Department spokesman said, averaging "less than five per cent of approvals."

Two of the papers banned dealt with spacecraft reentry, which overlaps into the science of missile ballistics. The third concerned spacecraft propulsion, and may have related to military rocketry.

The Soviet paper on photographic observations was to have been given by Leningrad University Prof. K. A. Kondratyev, and was withdrawn, said the Russians, "for political reasons."

The four other papers were canceled, the Soviet delegation explained, because their authors could not be in Madrid to give them.

Earlier, the U.S. Air Force had withdrawn from the Madrid meeting a paper by on rocket propulsion one of its chief scientists.

The second paper, to be given in Germany at the 10th annaul Air Force in Europe Medical-Surgical Conference, apparently discussed techniques of radiation detection and decontamination, little of which is classified, but may also have mentioned some secret aspects of nuclear weapon design.

While the paper was to be given at an Air Force conference, it is a conference attended by doctors from other NATO nations and is being held at a Wiesbaden hotel—considered by Air Force security officers a "public place" where security leaks night occur.